

# **2002 Annual Report of the Missouri State Park Advisory Board**

**Odell McGowan, Chairperson (1998-2002)**  
Creve Coeur

**E. Sanford Baker, Vice-Chairperson (2001-2004)**  
Kansas City

**Ann Johnson (1998-2003)**  
Holts Summit

**Emily Firebaugh (1998-2003)**  
Farmington

**Ed Stegner (1990-2002)**  
Pilot Grove

**Terry Satterlee (1995-2003)**  
Kansas City

**Andrew Wood (1997-2003)**  
Neosho

**Don Johnson (2001-2004)**  
Festus

**Howard Miedler (Newly appointed 2002-2005)**  
Moberly

**Bob Holden, Governor**

**Stephen M. Mahfood, Director**  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources

**Douglas K. Eiken, Director**  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Division of State Parks

## **Missouri State Park Advisory Board Record of Decisions for 2002**

January 11, 2002	Motion made to accept the Conceptual Development Plan for Van Meter State Park as presented. Motion approved.
	Motion made that the division would make the decision on deer hunts in state parks and keep the board informed. Motion approved.
	Motion made that the board agrees with a letter written by Director Steve Mahfood concerning the St John Bayou project, and also the recommendation that the hydrology project be done for the Big Oak Tree State Park. Motion approved.
March 8, 2002	Motion made to approve a launch fee of \$3.00 at the Lake Ozark Public Beach # 1 beginning May 17 <sup>th</sup> weekend. Motion approved.
May 10, 2002	Motion made to approve the new firewood policy. Motion approved.
	Election of officers: Motion made to accept the recommendations of Odell McGowan as Chair and Sandy Baker for Vice Chair. Motion approved.
November 15, 2002	Motion made to approve concessionaires' request for fee increases. Motion approved.

## 2002 Year-End Summary

### Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Division of State Parks

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources administers Missouri's state park system, which includes 83 state parks and historic sites. With almost 139, 670 acres, the state park system preserves the state's most outstanding natural landscapes and cultural landmarks, and provides opportunities for recreation. The following are some of the major highlights from 2002.

### 2002 Accomplishments

Throughout 2002, projects both apparent to the public and those behind the scenes have helped provide a better service to visitors of the state park system and to protect its resources for future generations. The following are some of the highlights:

A site recorded in the journals of William Clark in 1804 became Missouri's newest state historic site. The 13-acre site known as **Clark's Hill/Norton State Historic Site** was donated to the state. A trail and interpretation at the site will be open to the public in 2004 for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

The **Wonders of the Outdoor World (W.O.W)** National Outdoor Recreation and Conservation School was held in May at Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park in Wildwood. Patterned after the successful annual event in October at Roaring River State Park, this WOW event was targeted at urban residents and was part of the department's urban outreach initiative.

The system's newest state park, located at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, was officially named. The park was named **Edward "Ted" and Pat Jones-Confluence Point State Park** in honor of the two conservation leaders. Thanks to a \$1 million North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant and a lease agreement with the Metropolitan Park and Recreation District, the park has grown to 1,118 acres.

Through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Natural Resources, the Rockwood School District took over operation of the public pool and the Jacob L. Babler Outdoor Education Center at **Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park** in Wildwood. The agreement reduced operating costs at the park while still maintaining a quality service to the public.

A new initiative called **Missourians Improving Their State Parks** committed additional funds generated by the 2002 fees to provide enhanced facilities and services. The fees involved were for camping, cave and historic site tours, picnic shelter rentals and off-road vehicle permits. Extra revenue generated by these fees will be targeted for facilities and services requested by the public beyond what can be provided by current funding.

Through a cooperative agreement with the Missouri Electric Cooperatives, the division is working on a proposal to **upgrade electrical sites** in campgrounds along with other improvements.

The first year of the new **Campground Watch Program** proved to be very successful. The program, developed by the State Park Ranger Program to enhance community policing and crime prevention efforts, was implemented in 31 state parks and historic sites and will be expanded in future years.

Geologic wonders was the theme for the **2002 Missouri State Parks Passport Program**, which invited visitors to explore geologic wonders such as caves, sinkholes, shut-ins and natural bridges. The program encouraged participants to visit 10 different state parks and historic sites to earn a commemorative patch.

Following two focus group meetings, two open houses and discussions with legislators, the department decided to step back from aggressively pursuing its original plan for the **Missouri Civil Rights Museum** in the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center in Kansas City. The department will begin new efforts involving research, planning and community outreach.

More than 100 campground hosts attended the first **Campground Host Training Rally** in April at Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park. The rally was held to acquaint hosts with new initiatives and projects within the division, such as the campground reservation program **Missourians Improving Their State Parks**.

The department reached an agreement with Leo and Kay Drey that will allow the department to build and maintain trails through the **Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry**, a portion of the Pioneer Forest in southeast Missouri.

The wild cave tour through **Devil's Icebox Cave** in Rock Bridge Memorial State Park was modified to help protect federally endangered bats. The tours will now help protect the Indiana bats recently found hibernating in the cave along with the federally endangered gray bat that use it as a summer maternal habitat.

The **toll-free number** that has been used for all department information for many years was switched exclusively to state park information. For state park information, call 1-800-334-6946; for department information, call 1-800-361-4827.

More than 350 riders from 27 states participated in the **Katy Trail Ride 2002** along the 225-mile Katy Trail State Park. The theme of the ride was following in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark and much of the ride followed the Missouri River.

Work continued on a plan to create a **French Heritage Interpretive Area** in Ste. Genevieve. An operational plan was created for the Creole House, which is being proposed to serve as the center for a complex that would interpret French heritage.

A new state statute was created that enables **not-for-profit organizations** to enter into agreements with individual state parks to provide additional cooperative, interpretive and educational services. They can now use space in the facility to sell publications and other materials and the proceeds can be kept by that organization to benefit a particular facility. Cooperative agreements and procedures are being developed now to enable this to occur.

Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio State Historic Site became a member of the **National Historic Trust's Historic Artists Home Association**. This could provide an avenue for additional and specific training, preservation workshops, networking and marketing with other similar historic sites around the nation.

**The Battle of Pilot Knob** battlefield at Fort Davidson State Historic Site was listed by the Civil War Preservation Trust as among the top 25 most threatened battlefield sites because of potential industrial development.

Four major exhibits were offered at the **Missouri State Museum**. These included one on the accomplishments and contributions of African Americans to Missouri history, the story of women in Missouri's history; the story of George Hussman and his contribution to Missouri and California grape growing and wine making; and the life and times of Buck O'Neal from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City.

A sizeable collection of mining artifacts from the former Pea Ridge Iron Mine near Sullivan was acquired for the museum at **Missouri Mines State Historic Site**. Artifacts, including many instructional and safety signs, lamp recharging rack, tag board, shop furniture, tools, etc., will be used to enhance interpretation at the site.

The first year of **Pets as Park Visitors** campaign proved to be very successful and complaints about pet-related issues significantly declined. The campaign helped educate pet owners about health issues and appropriate pet behavior in state parks and historic sites. Positive feedback was received from most of the 12 state parks that distributed pet waste bags to encourage owners to pick up after their pets.

Researchers from Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg climbed to the top of trees in **Big Oak Tree State Park** to study what was in the tree canopies. The survey and inventory of tree canopy diversity will help park staff identify and preserve resources in the park.

A number of state parks rented **golf carts** for staff to use in the maintenance and management of campgrounds. These golf carts proved very cost effective and cut down on use of vehicles, while still providing transportation for staff.

State parks provided opportunity for scientific studies through 42 new **research projects**. Most of these were initiated by Midwest universities and included a population study of the critically imperiled pink planarian, researching habitat fragmentation and genetic divergence of the state endangered massasauga rattlesnake, and researching the natural history of the rare marsh pondsnail.

Through a cooperative agreement with the **Newspapers in Education** project through the Missouri Press Association (MPA), four features were produced on the theme "Missouri's Backyard: Exploring Your State Parks and Historic Sites." The features, which were offered to all MPA newspapers, were designed to encourage students to use their newspapers to learn about public lands. In conjunction, teacher workshops were offered at Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park and Watkins Woolen Mill State Park and Historic Site.

The **Cultural Resource Fund** was used to underwrite 23 projects at 15 state parks and historic sites and one central office program. The projects included such things as a bone fragments study, research on industrialization in the Rock Bridge Memorial State Park valley and Battle of Athens State Historic Site, restoration of a historic cellar, purchasing climate monitoring equipment for artifact storage and display areas, conservation treatment of gravestones, paintings and frames, and a conservator's assessment of Mark Twain's rockaway carriage.

New exhibits were installed at the nature center at **Roaring River State Park**.

A comprehensive **Natural Resource Database System** was developed to catalog all known plant and animal species in the park system. This was installed in every park and historic site to provide on-demand lists of birds, plants, trees or other species of interest, as well as help managers keep accurate biological inventories of park resources.

**Prescribed fire** continues to be an important aspect of many natural environments. Staff conducted 54 burns on 7,937 acres of land in 22 state parks. This benefited some of the most important of Missouri's natural landscapes, wildlife and plant life, including several rare or threatened species.

A \$56,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation allowed **Prairie State Park** to enhance and continue the successful resource management of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem.

Twenty communities and groups received \$1.1 million in federal **Recreational Trail Program** grants. Management of 130 active grants continued, and 131 environmental impact reviews were completed on various grant projects.

The 2202-2207 **Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational Plan** was completed.

A successful partnership between the Department of Natural Resources and the Missouri Department of Corrections was commemorated with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **Camp Hawthorn** at Lake of the Ozarks State Park.

**AmeriCorps teams** assisted park staff with stewardship projects such as glade restoration and constructing fire lines at seven state parks. Teams also began work on renovation of Camp Shawnee at Knob Noster State Park.

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) harvested prairie grass seed from the wet prairie at **Pershing State Park** for a mitigation site near Chillicothe. This is one of the largest mitigation sites undertaken by MoDOT and involved several agencies (Department of Natural Resources, Department of Conservation, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service). It will be used as an example of future wetland mitigation sites and cooperation among agencies.

Planning continues with Platte County for a trail to link the city of Weston with **Weston Bend State Park**.

After nearly three years of electronic cataloging, the **artifact database** has grown to include 23,314 records. It is estimated that the division holds approximately 200,000 artifacts in its collection.

**Natural resource management** included restoration projects in tallgrass prairies, savannas, glades and pine and oak woodlands. An allocation of \$150,000 funded projects in 17 state parks.

In August, the Interpretation Program co-hosted a teachers workshop on **exhibit planning** for the annual National History Day. Teachers were provided with instruction on basic exhibit planning and content considerations to help their students produce better exhibits for this national competition.

With improvements made to the greenhouses, the staff of the **Capitol Complex** took a big step in an effort to propagate their own plants and become less dependent on suppliers. The staff provides landscaping for the Capitol, Governor's Mansion and Garden, and several state office buildings.

The **State Park Ranger Program** continued to assist the State Capitol Police and other law enforcement agencies with security for state office buildings located in Jefferson City. The additional security measures were ordered after Sept. 11, 2001.

The **Missouri State Museum** loaned the Civil War battle flag of the 17<sup>th</sup> Missouri Regiment to the Haus der Geschichte Baden Wurttembrg in Stuttgart, Germany, for a special exhibit on the role of German immigrants in the American Civil War.

The new **Interpretive Themes Task Force**, made up of staff as well as scholars outside the agency, met to review topics and themes currently being interpreted and to recommend changes and additions needed to better represent the diversity of Missouri's rich history.

**Interpretive plans**, which determine how best to explain to the public what the parks and sites preserve and why, were completed for seven parks and sites: Battle of Lexington and Fort Davidson state historic sites, and Mark Twain, Crowder, Montauk, Lake of the Ozarks and Trail of Tears state parks. An additional 14 parks and sites are in the process of writing plans and 15 more are scheduled to begin in 2003.

**Gen. John J. Pershing Boyhood Home State Historic Site** had on display Gen. Pershing's West Point class ring of 1886 and a presentation watch given to him in 1924 upon his retirement from government service. These came from the estate of Gen. Pershing's grandson, and the loan was made possible by the Pershing Park Memorial Association.

Almost 200,000 people attended more than **270 special events** in more than 50 state parks and historic sites.

Through the **Volunteer in Parks** (VIP) program, almost 250 people volunteered as campground hosts, contributing almost 71,000 hours. More than 1,650 volunteers in other categories (aides, trail workers, interpreters, etc.) helped contribute to the total number of volunteer hours, which was 113,862.

The transition continues at **Van Meter State Park** as efforts are made to shift the interpretive focus to more Native American themes. Information is being gathered and contacts are being made with more American Indian tribes, scholars and archaeologists.

The Watkins Mill Association unveiled a new book called "**Waltus Watkins and His Mill.**" The coffee table-type book is filled with images and information about Watkins Mill, which is preserved today in Watkins Woolen Mill State Park and State Historic Site.

Initial archaeological research and site mapping of **Murphy's Lead Furnace** site (1848 lead smelter) was completed at Washington State Park. A local Boy Scout troop has volunteered to help clean up trash on the site as well as remove existing modern fencing. Additional clean up will continue by park staff.

The department purchased **371 acres** at various state parks and historic sites, including land at Roaring River, Taum Sauk Mountain, Big Sugar Creek and Bennett Spring state parks, and Harry S Truman Birthplace and Felix Valle House state historic sites.

Following a three-year study by the University of Missouri, it was found that allowing multiuse on a 25-mile section of **Katy Trail State Park** between Sedalia and Calhoun has not created any significant problems. Because of these results, equestrian use will continue on this section in addition to walking and bicycling.

New **audio-visual programs** were completed for Trail of Tears State Park, Prairie State Park and Bothwell Lodge State Historic Site. Work began on a new audio-visual production for Confederate Memorial State Historic Site. The sound track for the new video on the St. Francois Mountains is under production.

## 2002 Major Improvement Projects

The year of 2002 brought many significant improvement and construction projects within the Missouri state park system. The following are some of the highlights.

The campground at **Dr Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park** was officially reopened following a major renovation. The project included a new shower house, a new trailer sanitation disposal station, renovated campsites with new amenities and the conversion of 21 basic campsites to electric.

The first phase of restoration efforts for the house at the **Nathan Boone Homestead State Historic Site** were completed. The first phase included new interior flooring as well as exterior siding and roofing. The house is now open on a limited basis and subsequent restoration will continue before the site is officially opened to the public.

A new four-plex unit was built at **Montauk State Park** by Keeney, Inc., the park's concessionaire, in a partnership effort with the department.

Renovations were completed at the marina and day-use area at **Table Rock State Park**. At the day-use area, improvements included a new parking area, improved picnic sites, accessible concrete walkway and an additional courtesy dock at the boat ramp. At the marina, improvements included a new 50-space parking area, 40 new covered boat slips, long-term rental dock, new store dock and dock fleet. The marina improvements were in cooperation with Starboard Corp., which operates the marina.

Improvements completed at **Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site** included a new parking area and new guttering and storm drainage for the street. Other changes reflect efforts to enhance the historical atmosphere of the house.

**Locust Creek Covered Bridge State Historic Site** was restored and renovated. The bridge now rests on new stone veneer piers and new earthen ramps and wooden decks are in place to allow pedestrian traffic back on this bridge for the first time in 10 years.

Work continued on development at **Morris State Park**, which is scheduled to be open to the public in spring 2003. Development includes a two-mile trail, parking area, vault toilets and a covered kiosk area.

A new walkway and stairs at **Roaring River State Park** now provides access from several areas of the park to the Roaring River Inn and Conference Center without having to walk along the highway and cross a bridge. The walkway crosses Dry Hollow branch and provides access from the pool area, park office and campground.

At **Onondaga Cave State Park**, work continued on the renovation of the campground, which will include increasing the number of electrical sites and reducing flooding in the campground.

A major renovation and expansion of the park store at **Sam A. Baker State Park** was completed. Expansion doubled the sales floor area and included a large merchandise storage room.

A new accessible overlook and parking area was constructed near the office at **Hawn State Park**. As a part of this project, an additional parking lot was constructed at the north end of the park and the 4.4 mile White Oaks Trail was constructed.

Improvements to **Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park** should result in easier access and more satisfied visitors. The main parking lot was enlarged and now has space for 94 vehicles. The addition of a third highway lane near the entrance allows visitors to wait in a safe location until

they can access the park. An additional day-use area has been improved nearby, providing visitors waiting in line with opportunities for recreation before entry. A new picnic area was created between the campground and the main parking lot.

Work began on the expansion of the store at **Bennett Spring State Park**. The project will more than double the size of the store and when completed, will offer to the public a greater variety of both supplies and service. Phase one should be completed in February before the opening of trout season with final completion in August.

Work began on a major renovation at the visitor center for **Route 66 State Park**. The project includes creating the center's orientation room and enlarging the center's exhibit space, gift shop and merchandising area. Other improvements include elevators and bathrooms to assist people with disabilities, and new mechanical and electrical systems. Work should be completed by May 2003.

Following an investigation at eight state parks to assess the effects and risks of using **CCA-treated material**, the decision was made to seal all CCA-treated structures of many types throughout the state park system as a precautionary measure.

Major renovation and restoration work was done at the stable at **Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park**. This structure was originally built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

A new service building was constructed at **Harry S Truman State Park** to replace the one destroyed by a fire in 2001.

At **Long Branch State Park**, a full-service marina was installed. In addition, an accessible fishing dock was installed in a cost-share agreement with the Missouri Department of Conservation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

A road relocation project at **Thousand Hills State Park** now allows the one-way road to include a formal bicycle/pedestrian path, the first one in the state park system.

An accessible fishing dock was installed at **Thousand Hills State Park** in a cost-share agreement with the Missouri Department of Conservation and the city of Kirksville.

Work continued much of the summer on damage from a major flood in March at **Sam A. Baker State Park**. The worst flood ever to hit the park damaged the visitor center, destroyed almost 30 campsites and damaged many trails.

At **St. Joe State Park**, work began on 25 additional campsites in the park's off-road-vehicle campground. The project is being partially funded by a federal Recreational Trail Fund grant. The campground should be completed by February 2004, but parts of it may be open sooner.

**Cabin renovations** completed at Bennett Spring State Park and Meramec State Park, and all eight barracks at Camp Rising Sun in Lake of the Ozarks State Park were improved with new restrooms and showers.

At nine trail heads along **Katy Trail State Park**, five information depots were constructed and seven precast vault toilets were installed.

Major **sewer renovation/repair** projects were completed at Bennett Spring and Robertsville state parks and the first phase of a multi-phase sewer project was completed at Roaring River State Park. Arrow Rock State Historic Site was connected to the new municipal sewer system.

**Campground shower house** projects either completed or under way include those at St. Francois, Roaring River, Table Rock and Crowder state parks.

A new pool change house was constructed at **Washington State Park**. The new change house replaces one built in the 1960s and will better accommodate the needs of the park.

A new **boat launch** was constructed at Big Lake State Park, and work has begun on boat ramps at Washington and Route 66 state parks.

A major **ice storm** in early 2002 in northwest Missouri had a tremendous impact on many facilities with the most damage at Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio, Confederate Memorial, and Battle of Lexington state historic sites, and Van Meter state park. Although the damage has been repaired, visitors may see the impact from these storms on trees and in other areas for many years.

Construction began on a new road to the marina at **Lake Wappapello State Park**. The project includes upgrading the boat launch at Allison Point so it is accessible in times of low water.

A new boat ramp and vault toilet were constructed at **Big Lake State Park**.

## Awards and Recognitions

Many individuals and groups received awards or were recognized in some way during 2002.

Readers of *Rural Missouri* voted 11 Missouri state parks as the best vacation destinations in a “**Best of Missouri**” pole taken by the newspaper. Ha Ha Tonka, Bennett Spring, Elephant Rocks, Meramec, Montauk, Mark Twain, Johnson’s Shut-Ins, Rock Bridge Memorial and Roaring River state parks were voted the favorite state parks. Katy Trail, Ha Ha Tonka and Rock Bridge Memorial state parks were voted as having the best hiking trails in the state. The Taum Sauk Section of the Ozark Trail, which traverses through Taum Sauk Mountain and Johnson’s Shut-Ins state parks, was the editor’s choice in this category. Johnson’s Shut-Ins State Park was overwhelmingly voted the best swimming hole in Missouri. The best winter getaway, according to the editor, was Thousand Hills State Park and Bennett Spring State Park came in second for the best fishing spot in Missouri.

Paul Nelson, former director of the Operations and Resource Management Program, received the Missouri Department of Natural Resources’ **Natural Areas Stewardship Award** for 2002. The award recognized his commitment of more than 25 years as a vigilant supporter of the state park mission, and as a primary advocate promoting the value of biodiversity and natural landscapes.

Two groups of Division of State Parks’ employees received the **Missouri Department of Natural Resources Director Award**. Staff receiving the award for their efforts in organizing a Lewis and Clark workshop in a short amount of time were Frank Wesley and Linda Gentry, Missouri Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission office; Jim Denny, John Cuning and Brian Stith, Interpretation Program; Richard Forry, Northern Missouri Historic District; Judy Tripp, Cultural/Natural Resource Management Program; Janice Hoelscher, Sue Holst and Wynonna McClammer, Division Director’s Office; David Kelly and Ellen Murphy, Market Development Program; and Chris Buckland, Planning and Development Program. Another group of staff received the same award for quality and productivity in catching up a backlog of payment processing. The group included Vickie Akin, Julie Blackwell, Wilma Engelbrecht, Michelle Gelven, Glen Gessley, Debbi Hall, Kim Kliethermes, Judy Looten, Russell Rottmann, Tammy Yarnell, Sue Crider and Holly Robbins, Financial and Information Resource Management Program; and Susan Barnett (now at Missouri River District) and Billie Siebeneck, Division Director’s Office.

The following individuals were honored with the Division of State Parks **Masterpiece Awards** in the year 2002: Cyndi Evans, Prairie State Park; Marian Goodding, North Hills District; Jacquelyn Evans, Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park; Timothy Clifford, Watkins Woolen Mill State Park and State Historic Site; Dennis Sloan, Johnson’s Shut-Ins State Park; Alice Forister, Missouri River District; Sgt. Vince Adams, Mastodon State Historic Site; Dana Neeley, North Construction Unit; Mari-Jo Wilkes, Financial and Information Resource Management Program; Glen Gessley, Financial and Information Resource Management; Jim Yancey, Operations Program; Frank St. Clair, North Hills District; Cindy Hall, Lake of the Ozarks State Park; Jeff Crook, Mark Twain State Park; Tom Vogt, Confederate Memorial State Historic Site; Denise Dowling, Big Oak Tree State Park; Sara and Chuck Yates, volunteers at Graham Cave and Katy Trail state parks; Capt. Tom Jarboe, North Hills District; Steve Klenc, Planning and Development Program; Charles Shelton, Interpretation Program; Dan Paige and Greg Combs, Eastern Parks District; Kris Purcell, Lee Wilbeck, Megan Crist, Paula White,

Marcia Almond, Earnest Libby, Steve Almond and John Garvey, North Hills District; Randall Forbes, Cynthia Stevens, Joel Allred, Gary Ramsey and Connie Winfrey, Van Meter State Park; Bruce Steding and Larry Moore, Arrow Rock State Historic Site; Monica Chin, Financial and Information Resource Management Program; Ronald Holland and Patrick Lutes, North Construction Unit; and Laura Hendrickson, Judith Richey, Leroy Williams, Doug Anderson, David Reynolds, Dale Benedict and Yvonne Cox, Pomme de Terre State Park.

The **Association of Missouri Interpreters** (AMI) named Jamin Bray, former interpretive resource specialist at Montauk State Park, Distinguished Interpreter of the Year in the professional category. Tiffani Addington, interpretive resource specialist at Onondaga Cave State Park, received the Best Interpretive Effort by an Individual Award from the AMI. AMI named Amy Dozier, seasonal interpretive naturalist at Roaring River State Park, the Distinguished Interpreter of the Year in the seasonal category. Christina King, seasonal interpretive naturalist at Crowder State Park, received the undergraduate scholarship from AMI.

Ranger Nicholas Bratton of Harry S Truman State Park received the **Chief's Award for Excellence** from the State Park Ranger Program. The annual award was developed to recognize an employee who shows overall commitment to the missions and values of the department, division and program, protecting the resources and providing safety and security for the visitors.

The sound track for a new video developed by the division has received the **Crystal Award of Excellence** from the Communicator Award Series. The Communicator Awards is an international awards program that recognizes individuals and companies in the communications field whose talent and creativity achieve a high standard of excellence. The video, entitled "Mountains of Antiquity" is about the St. Francois Mountains in southeast Missouri and should be completed early in 2003.

## New Centralized Campground Reservation System Implemented during 2002

The Department of Natural Resources' Division of State Parks implemented a significant customer service initiative during 2002 with the establishment of a centralized campground reservation system. The official start date was Jan. 1, 2003, but much of the preparation for the project took place in 2002 and before.

The new system makes reserving a campsite in state parks easier and more convenient. More campsites in more state parks are available – 2,000 campsites in 24 state parks. Campers can now make reservations by calling a toll-free number (1-877-ICampMO or 1-877-422-6766) from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week or on the Web at [www.mostateparks.com](http://www.mostateparks.com) 24 hours a day. In addition to its convenience, the new reservation system provides access to Missouri state park campsites on a fair and equal basis to all individuals.

The centralized reservation system was implemented in response to the needs of the state park users and the Governor's Excellence in Customer Service initiative of 1995. In 1996, the state legislature authorized funding to begin its implementation. The new centralized reservation system was competitively bid and awarded to a private contractor in August 2002.

In preparation for the implementation of the system, detailed information about each campsite (even those not reservable) in the 24 state parks was gathered and is available on the state park Web site. This information includes a layout of each campground, details of each campsite, and a photograph of each campsite.

Another convenience with the new system is that campers can now make reservations up to six months in advance instead of three months as in the old system. Reservations can still be made up to two days before arrival if campsites are available. Payment for reservations can be made by credit card, debit card, check, money order or department-issued gift certificate or camping coupon. The regular camping fees will apply and an \$8.50 fee per site will be charged for making a reservation. A \$5 fee will be charged for changing or canceling a reservation.

To ensure that the state park system serves all campers, a significant portion of campsites in state parks with reservations still will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The only exception is Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, where the entire campground is reservable. Also, in 2003, all sites in 15 state parks and historic sites will be on a first-come, first-serve basis.

State parks offering reservable campsites: Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park, Wildwood; Sam A. Baker State Park, Patterson; Bennett Spring State Park, Lebanon; Cuivre River State Park, Troy; Finger Lakes State Park, Columbia; Hawn State Park, Ste. Genevieve; Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, Middlebrook; Knob Noster State Park, Knob Noster; Lake of the Ozarks State Park, Kaiser; Lake Wappapello State Park, Williamsville; Meramec State Park, Sullivan; Montauk State Park, Salem; Pomme de Terre State Park, Hermitage; Roaring River State Park, Cassville; St. Francois State Park, Bonne Terre; St. Joe State Park, Park Hills; Stockton State Park, Stockton; Table Rock State Park, Branson; Trail of Tears State Park, Jackson; Harry S Truman State Park, Warsaw; Mark Twain State Park, Stoutsville; Wakonda State Park, La Grange; Washington State Park, DeSoto; and Watkins Woolen Mill State Park and State Historic Site, Lawson.